

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

February 17, 2004

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll. There were thirteen Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, O’Neil, Lopez,
Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault and Forest

Absent: Alderman Porter

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair. The Clerk will notify you when you have 30 seconds remaining and I’d ask you to wrap up at that time.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Bob Chabot, 73 Joseph Street, Manchester, NH (abutter), stated:

Deputy City Clerk Johnson stated Mr. Chabot has left.

Jane Beaulieu, 609 So. Main Street, Manchester, NH (Bass Island), stated:

Matt is passing out some information to take home and I’m going to be referring to you, so if we could wait until he passes it out that would be great. It’s in regard to Bass Island. I just wanted to come here before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to give you an update as to where we are and just to give you some supplemental information that you may not have about what is going on with the Bass Island property. I do have some newspaper clippings...the first one is from the latest *Hippo Press*, the “Saga of Bass Island Continues”...there’s some great information in there, it’s a letter that I wrote in regards to the Bass Island Project...in the second paragraph I highlighted basically for you to understand why I am so active in trying to preserve this land. Basically, the Bass Island Preservation Committee is working to secure Bass Island, to place a conservation easement on the land and restore the blacksmith building which is located on the south end of Bass Island. The next page is an article in *The Union Leader* dated February 12th...it gives you

some information about what went on in court this week...basically, the judge could not understand what was going on with the process and the project. The important piece is the document here from my Attorney Bob Backus in regard to the Bass Island Project and the next is the FEMA agency letter stating that the floodway map has been revised but there is information there about how it had not been amended by appropriate community action...the next is a letter...not a letter, but information...proposed amendment to the Zoning Map...this is a process by which something is amended which is the floodway map which needs to be amended before the proposed building is out of the floodway. So, for your information here is the update on the Bass Island Project. Thank you.

Robin Comstock, Chamber of Commerce, 889 Elm Street, Manchester, NH (Parking Meters), stated:

Thank you for hearing me tonight. The Chamber supports rolling back the hours of operation for the City parking meters from eight o'clock to six o'clock PM. Our support for this change in parking meter enforcement is based on input that we have received from our downtown merchants and has been endorsed by our Downtown Committee and the Chamber's Board of Directors. The Chamber believe that by reducing the time from eight to six o'clock many of the downtown restaurants will see an increase in business by making the downtown more hospitable and friendly to evening activities. Many of our downtown restaurants have expressed their frustration with having meters run until eight o'clock PM because this puts them at a disadvantage compared to other restaurants in the City that don't have to deal with customers fearing a \$10 ticket just simply because their dinner may be late on delivery. The same applies to other members, in particular, like the performing arts community. This position is reflective of the Chamber's prior stance on parking management that was put in place relative to the Verizon Wireless Arena. Parking meters initially went from five to ten o'clock PM under the first parking management plan implemented with the opening of the arena. This plan was altered shortly after it took effect based on the input of Chamber and downtown merchants. At that point, eight o'clock PM was put into place as a trial time to gauge the effect of parking in downtown during events at the arena. We now know that parking is contained mainly around the arena for most events and there's been little noticeable increase in parking further north on Elm Street. The Chamber believe that reducing this time to six o'clock PM will meet the needs of any evening visitors to our downtown. And, will encourage shopping, strolling, dining, and simple enjoyment of the performing arts and theatre segment. Due to the dedication of many throughout the community Downtown Manchester is alive and flourishing as a home to offices, shops, restaurants, entertainment and many residents. Your support of this change will build on our great foundation and lead us to further development of a well-balanced and user friendly downtown that is a place to come and visit, a hospitable community we'll all enjoy all that we have to offer. Thank you very much.

Brian Fortin, Modern Bride, 1000 Elm Street, Manchester, NH (Parking), stated:

I'm also Chair of the Chamber's Downtown Committee and a past Chair of Intown's Downtown Committee. I'm here to talk about parking meters, I've been here before this Board in the past regarding the parking meters and we appreciate everything that the City has done regarding parking meters in rescinding Saturday meters and we're here...the downtown merchants are asking that we do rescind the meters back to six o'clock. We've recognized that having the meters in the evening have been detrimental to the businesses. Too many people are coming downtown being tagged and are just having a poor experience. This City has done an absolute wonderful job of creating an environment with the civic center, possibly with the baseball stadium and trying to bring people downtown. But, unfortunately, the meters have created an environment where people come down and I've received two e-mails this past week from clients that I've actually forwarded to the Mayor that they come down to do the business that they have to and leave because they're afraid to stay here and the wrong environment, the wrong kind of City that we businesses want continue to be successful in the evening we really need to have the meters rescinded back to six o'clock. Our committee has contacted a number of businesses in the last week through a survey with Intown Manchester and through some phone calls and a number of the businesses have responded through Alderman Guinta and myself and to Stephanie Lewry at Intown and almost all of the businesses have asked that the meters be rescinded back to six o'clock...it's the major majority of the businesses. So, I ask that you please go back to six o'clock on behalf of the businesses.

Joe Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

For the record, I would just like to say that four years ago when I was an Alderman I voted against the increase the ten o'clock at night, but I would say on behalf of the Mayor he put together a commission of people from downtown and the Chamber of Commerce and it was the Chamber of Commerce that made that recommendation to the Board and to the Mayor to put the meters to ten o'clock. I warned them that people would be upset and angry and I'm glad that we rolled it back to eight o'clock and got rid of Saturdays and again if you move it to six o'clock it will definitely have a more positive effect on the people of Manchester who come down here. It's not really the money that people care about, it's the fact that they like to go to a restaurant or shop with a little bit of piece of mind of not having to worry about running back to their cars or getting a ticket. Because obviously getting a ticket causes problems because you've got to come back to downtown and you can't park anyway. So, if you roll it back I would like to thank Alderman Forest and Alderman Guinta for leading the charge on this by the way and I would just respectfully request, your Honor, I know that tonight you're going to have a baseball meeting of the Riverfront Committee and I would like to be able to sit home and be able to watch that meeting live on MCTV, it's one of the reasons why we have MCTV and I'd rather hope that the Chairman of the Riverfront Committee rather have it live so we could watch it, hear the questions and hear what's going on around the baseball committee...I know you want to change the zoning or change some

of the details in the plan and I would rather you wouldn't go into a private room and have a private meeting. I know we're welcome to go there if we want to come down to City Hall but one of the benefits of MCTV is that we're able to sit at home and watch these meetings. So, I would respectfully request, your Honor, that I'm trying to lose a little bit of weight and I get to walk on my treadmill while I'm watching MCTV, so if you could have that meeting open for the rest of us we would really appreciate that and I know a few people have mentioned it to us also. Thank you, your Honor.

Kathy Hamel, 823 Elm Street, Manchester, NH (Parking), stated:

I own the Heart and Hand...I would have to disagree with a lot that I have heard this evening. I really hadn't been asked until there was some sort of a survey...very, very much appreciated...hearing about that and having this opportunity to even look into it I've long been extremely worried about the parking downtown and I've been here almost eight years and I have a very big track record for supporting downtown and being committed to it. However, the businesses significantly are harmed by the way that we are doing our parking. On the rollback I'm not very, very strong but Diane from Hatfield Gallery has asked me to express her wishes...she does not want it rolled back. Most of her people come in after work and there's no parking because the people on our block, at least, I don't know about other blocks...it's the downtown workers from all of the highrises and the apartment dwellers and if we change it back to six that will mean that at four o'clock you can park and never move again. At four o'clock after a while all of the apartment people and the workers will know it and in effect they can park at four and thereby never have to move again; that really hurts downtown...Saturday meters, I have to say while I have a chance I would do a great deal to see them put back in place. What we are seeing is no parking at all. We used to save three spaces in front of our building for when the businesses opened...I pay \$200 a month for myself and my two employees to park elsewhere and you can't even save three spaces anymore, they're already taken by apartment dwellers that as I see as a big problem. I will tell you that hundred of times in the last six months I've had customers call and say I went around the block seven times and I couldn't come in, so I stand on that and we did a very strong survey...15-minute increments for two or three weeks and would share that with anyone.

Walter Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester, NH (Concerned Taxpayers of Manchester), stated:

It's a pleasure to be here tonight. I'm one of the members of the Concerned Taxpayer of Greater Manchester and we had a meeting last night and we talked about a lot of things and one thing we talked about was the development down in the Singer Park area. We came to the conclusion, rightly or wrongly, that the thing is not set in cement yet. In other words, it keeps changing...the retail is contracting and highrises are going to be built and so on and so forth and I just wonder if we could finally come to or if you could finally come to a conclusion as to actually what is going to be done in that area and I thank you for the

opportunity to speak here tonight and as I say there's a lot of confusion and we'd like to clear it up. Thank you.

Janet Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm really concerned about the Hackett Hill development. I'm very pleased and impressed that we found an ancient swamp, cypress swamp there and when we went up to view it and the Conservancy led us through this swamp to see it, I noticed that at the very top of Hackett Hill there is a parking lot and I mentioned as we were walking through this swamp and it is beautiful it is something that we should preserve...I mentioned that with the parking lot so close and it is on a watershed that will go down...part of it is on the watershed but will go down into the swamp. If you start pouring salt there and utilizing that parking lot for parking it's going to destroy the swamp and I'm very concerned. To keep the development on the south side of that hill and away from this watershed where any oils or gasoline or whatever, salt and so forth would drain into that swamp and kill what we are trying to preserve, I would appreciate it and I know the Conservancy would because I mentioned that and the gentleman that was leading us turned right around and said I hope you talk about that...that was about two years ago, a year ago or so.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk